

Group Resource

Sermon Notes – Sunday, May 24, 2015

Series: Why Church?
Message: Unity through Agreement, Part IV
Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-16

- I. In this series, we are examining God's design for the church and the powerful impact that the church can make in this world.
- II. While we strive to be a church community that is healthy, growing, and full of love, the danger of any thriving community is that it becomes an exclusive community. Our challenge is to love the church while still loving and reaching out to the people who are not a part of the church.
- III. The Book of Acts provides us with a picture of the fruit of a healthy church: *God's message continued to spread. (Luke 6:7a)*
 - a. God's church is the most resilient organism in the earth. The church should always be on mission spreading the good news of Jesus Christ, even when there is resistance to the message.
 - b. Jesus promised that no matter what happens in the church, to the church, or out of the church - that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.
 - c. Jesus said this: He LOVES the Church. She is his Bride
 - i. **EPHESIANS 5:25-30** For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word.*²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.²⁸ In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself.²⁹ No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church.³⁰ And we are members of his body.
 - d. Jesus, said that he would feed, care, wash, and love his church so that she would be holy and without fault and present to himself a glorious church
- IV. The goal of the church is not to achieve unity for unity sake – rather our unity allows us to accomplish our mission: *that none would perish, but everyone would come to repentance.*
- V. The church gathers – so that we may then be sent out.
 - a. There is not one rock, cave, or place on earth that God doesn't have authority and power. God dispatches His church throughout the earth to be witnesses of His power and glory.
 - b. Hab 2:14 declares that *as the waters fill the sea, the earth will be filled with an awareness of the glory of the LORD.*
 - c. Acts 1:8 declares *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere--in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*
- VI. While God sends the church to be a light to a dying world, he never calls individuals to complete this assignment by themselves. The church is sent out collectively as a unified body.
- VII. However, we cannot effectively show Christ to the world, if we do not truly know him.
 - a. When we are a part of a local assembly that is healthy, growing and full of love, God transforms us to look more and more like Jesus.
 - b. But Godly transformation is not just about us – God delivers us, sets us free, and blesses us – so that we can be a blessing to others

- c. Trying to show God without knowing God only creates chaos (Acts 19:11-16)
- VIII. The mission of the body of Christ is both within the four walls of the church and outside of the four walls.
 - a. Neglecting either part of our mission causes us to be ineffective in our calling. We must grow in unity as a church while still reaching the world outside of the church.
- IX. 4 aspects that help us to be effective witnesses to the world
- X. **1 - Love God**
 - a. We can't be effective witnesses, if we love God on our own terms. We must love God on His terms.
- XI. **2 - Love His church**
 - a. If Jesus was willing to die for the collective church – we should love His church with the same level of commitment. We must each take a stand in making God's church a glorious church!
- XII. **3 - Love the mission**
 - a. If you love the mission, you will constantly ask yourself, "How can I further God's message continuing to spread?" and "How can I be the most effective witness of his transforming power?"
- XIII. **4 - Love the work**
 - a. The mission of the church cannot be accomplished without people pulling up their sleeves and doing hard work.
 - b. **2 CORINTHIANS 5:20-21 NLT** So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" ²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.
 - c. Being an ambassador is messy and sometimes uncomfortable. You have to reach outside of known territories in order that the Word of God may go forth.
- XIV. When we Love God, His Church, the mission of the church, and the work of the church, the results are glorious!

Group Resource

Let's Talk Notes – Sunday, May 24, 2015

Series: Why Church?
Message: Unity through Agreement, Part IV
Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-16

1. What makes you feel included in a community? What makes you feel excluded? How does a thriving community protect from becoming an exclusive community. Do you find it challenging to love the church while still loving and reaching out to the people who are not a part of the church?
2. **Read 1 Corinthians 3:4-9.** What was happening in the Corinthian church? How did the Apostle Paul respond to their challenges? How does the unity of Paul and Apollos serve the mission of Christ Jesus?
3. Pastor Joseph shared that the mission of the body of Christ is both within and outside of the four walls of the church. "We must grow in unity as a church while still reaching the world outside of the church." As a group, list 5-7 ways that the body of Christ can serve both within and outside of the four walls of the church. How can you personally improve fellowship at Mars Hill and contribute to the overall mission of furthering God's message continuing to spread?
4. **Read John 21:15-17.** What did Jesus expect of Peter? How does a passionate love for God transform how we accomplish the mission and work of the church?
5. The fourth instruction that Pastor Joseph shared was that we must love the **work** of the church. The work of the church can often be messy. How do you remain committed to the work of the church when the work gets messy? How can we encourage one another in the body of Christ? **Read Galatians 6:9.**
6. 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 reminds us that we are Christ's ambassador. Think about some of the places that God is sending you as His ambassador. How effective are you in sharing the light? How can your real.life group pray for you so that you can continue to be a light in the darkness?